

HAVC 117

CONTEMPORARY ART OF AFRICA



Ibrahim Mahama, “*TRANSFER(S)*” (2023)

Summer Session 1: June 24 - July 26

Class Times: Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00 – 12:00

Instructor: Aaron Samuel Mulenga.

Preferred Pronouns: He/him

Email: amulenga@ucsc.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 12:00 - 1:00 pm

TA: Zoe Weldon-Yochim

Preferred Pronouns: she/her

Email: zweldony@ucsc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 - 1:00 pm

This is an online class. (synchronously)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course equips undergraduate students with the critical skills to closely examine work generated by artists and scholars from Africa and its diasporas. Covering the 1960s-present, the class will begin by focusing on art reflective of independence movements and nationalism in Africa, followed by art that continues to grapple with the consequences of colonialism. We will examine a range of work by artists and scholars residing in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, as well as Britain and the United States. Students will leave with a greater awareness of the lasting impact of colonialism in Africa and how it continues to inform the understanding of its peoples and cultures and what makes up the notion of what is considered to be “Contemporary African Art”.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Address and engage with the ideas about Africa that circulate in the “West”
- Analyze art and visual culture using art historical/visual studies terminology
- Examine the impact institutions and exhibitions have had on the display of art and visual culture from Africa
- Discuss issues and debates relevant to the field of art and visual culture from Africa
- Recognize and recall prominent artists, scholars, and works associated with the field.

The History of Art and Visual Culture Department has identified four program learning outcomes (PLO) for its B.A. program. This class fulfills all PLO at an intermediate level. For further information, please see <https://havic.ucsc.edu/program/introduction>.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

Classes are online and synchronous. The class is a combination of lecture, discussion, viewing content, in-class work, guest lectures, and group work.

WORKLOAD

UC Senate Regulation 760 specifies that one academic credit corresponds to a total of 30 hours of work for the median student over the quarter. This means that for a 5-credit course, students are expected to do thirty hours of work per week during a 5-week term. For this course, six hours per week are spent synchronous lectures. While everyone reads and writes at their own pace, it is recommended that students allow seven hours per week to read and take notes on the required texts. Seven hours per week should be spent preparing for the “Leading Discussion”. An additional 10 hours in the week should be given to preparing for both the Exhibition reflection and Final paper. The aim will be to build up towards these assignments slowly each week and write the Final paper in week 4 and the Exhibition reflection in week 5.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: Since summer session courses move quickly, attendance at all synchronous sessions is mandatory. More than 1 unexcused absence will result in a lowered grade. 3 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade in the course.

Communication is key. If you are struggling to make a deadline or know you will miss a class session, communicate with me or your TA and plan ahead.

Late Assignments: Assignments submitted after the deadline will not be accepted except in special circumstances. If you realize you are needing such an accommodation, please email me ahead of the deadline amulenga@ucsc.edu or meet with me after class by staying in the Zoom room after the class is dismissed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments Breakdown

Graded Assignments

Participation: 10 points

Exhibition Reflection: 20 points

Leading Discussion: 10 points

Reading Responses: 20 points

Quizzes: 20 points

Final Paper: 20 points

Total=100 points

Participation: 10 points

Since the structure of the course includes discussion, in-class work, and group work, students are required to actively engage with the content and participate in class. Participation includes but is not limited to commenting on an artistic or scholarly work, asking and responding to questions, and doing the activities assigned in class.

Exhibition Reflection: 20 points

Due Tuesday 9 July

500 minimum or 750 maximum words. You are required to visit an exhibition on Contemporary African Art of your choice and write a 2-3 page exhibition reflection. Students are encouraged to visit this exhibition in person but if this is not possible an online exhibition visit through a museum or gallery websites will be acceptable. For this assignment you can reflect/review a

section of the exhibition such as the themes and ideas that were engaged with (be sure to include an artwork during this analysis). Alternatively you could conduct a visual analysis of one of the works in the exhibition and evaluate how the exhibition informs your interpretation of this work.

Possible Exhibitions to Review:

Wangechi Mutu: Intertwined (January 31st - July 14th, 2024), NOMA. New Orleans

Zanele Muholi: Eye Me (January 18–August 11, 2024) SFMOMA. San Francisco

Leilah Babirye: We Have a History (June 22, 2024 – June 22, 2025) De Young Museum. San Francisco

El Anatsui: Behind the Red Moon (10 October 2023 - 14 April 2024) TATE. London

NB: Since the class is a virtual class, you are welcome to search for an African exhibition anywhere in the world, such as at the Zeitz MOCAA which is in South Africa. The exhibitions above I have shared are what I am aware of and two of which are within close proximity for view. If you choose to look up another exhibition please run it by me.

Leading Discussion: 10 points

For each session, select students will be in charge of leading discussion based on the readings. This entails preparing the reading response as well as generating discussion questions to engage the class. We will assign texts during the first week of class.

Reading Responses: 20 points

A reading response(s) is due on Canvas before every class session. Each response is meant to prepare you for discussion, and also help me and your TA understand your interests and points that require clarification. Reading responses will be assessed according to their completeness (see criteria below) and timeliness. Each response should be about half a page and should be typed using Arial or Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and 1-inch margins.

For each required text, please address the following:

- Identify 3-5 keywords.
- What is the main argument of the text or what is the authors thesis/main idea?
- Note an important section of the text that you would like to engage with or something you did not understand and need more clarity over. (This can also be an image included in the text or a part of the reading that excited you!)
- What are your questions about the text?

In total, there are 10 before-class readings that require a reading response.

Quizzes: 20 points

Every Monday starting Week 2, students will take a short quiz to help you recall information about artistic and scholarly works from the prior week. In total, you will take 4 quizzes that are each worth 5 points.

Final Paper: 20 points

This final paper will engage with the works of one artist of your choosing and the ways in which their work is pushing the conversation on contemporary African art forward in the field of art history. You will receive a list of guiding questions and a rubric to help you write your paper.

This paper should be between 800 – 1000 words or 3-4 pages in Arial or Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, with 1 inch margins, double spaced, with pagination, pdf document using Chicago Manual Style.

For citation guides: the Owl Purdue website:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

Accessibility & DRC Accommodations:

I aim to make our learning community as accessible as possible. This means that I aim to provide accessible materials and to create opportunities for different kinds of engagement in our classroom space. If you come across materials that are not accessible to you or experience a barrier to your participation in a class or meeting, please bring this to my attention and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability (disabilities can include mental health and attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), please inform me as soon as possible. In addition, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) to me by email. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Title IX, CARE, & CAPS: [Title IX Office](#) is committed to fostering a campus climate in which members of our community are protected from all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based harassment and discrimination. Title IX is a neutral office committed to safety, fairness, trauma-informed practices, and due process. Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the [Campus Advocacy Resources & Education \(CARE\) Office](#) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential, counseling support by calling (831) 459-2628. You

can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office by calling (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies call 911.

Slug Support: [Slug Support](#) can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with Slug Support, please contact the Dean of Students Office at 831-459-4446 or send an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

Slug Help/Technology: [ITS Support Center](#) is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

Tutoring & Learning Support: At [Learning Support Services \(LSS\)](#), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and with all perspectives feel included and are able to learn and achieve their goals in this course. The diversity that all students bring to this class is a resource, strength, and benefit to us all. It is my intent to bring to class materials and activities that embrace a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and positions. Your suggestions for making this learning community as inclusive as possible are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know if you identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he/she/they may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions

imposed either by the provost of his/her/their college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

You are expected to come to lecture having read the reading assigned for that day, which is available through Canvas. All assigned readings and videos will be available in the Canvas module.

CAMERA POLICY

While we understand that students will be taking this class in varied locations, students should keep their cameras on during group discussions and during Q & A with guest speakers. Where possible keep your cameras on during lecture.

WEEK 1

Session 1: Tuesday 25 June

Contextualizing “Contemporary African Art”

Readings:

- HAVC 117 Course Syllabus
- Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield. *Contemporary African Art*. Thames & Hudson, 1999. (Required)
- Enwezor, Okwui and Okeke-Agulu, Chika. Situating Contemporary African Art: Introduction in *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*. Damiani, 2009.
- Barnett, Sylvan. Writing a Review of an Exhibition in *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 8th ed. Longman, 2003

Guest: Lauren Tate Baeza

Session 2: Thursday 27 June

An Idea of Africa. Introducing El Anatsui

Readings:

- Vogel, Susan M, and El Anatsui. Researching Venice From Nsukka in *El Anatsui: Art and Life*. Prestel, 2012. (Required)
- Gallagher, Julia, Theorising Image: A Relational Approach in *Images of Africa: Creation, Negotiation and Subversion*. Manchester University Press, 2015.

Guest: Elisabeth Cameron

WEEK 2

Session 1: Tuesday 2 July

Art Practice in Africa and Abroad. Introducing Wangechi Mutu

Readings:

- Claudia Schmuckli, Isaac Julien, Wangechi Mutu. *Wangechi Mutu: I Am Speaking, Are You Listening?* Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; DelMonico Books · D.A.P, 2021. (Required)
- bell hooks, “Oppositional Gaze,” *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, (Boston, Mass: South End Press, 2007).
- Artist as Activist Zanele Muholi: *Eye Me* by Caroline Harris: <https://www.sfmoma.org/read/artist-as-activist-zanele-muholi-eye-me/>

Guest: Etinosa Yvonne

Session 2: Thursday 4 July (No Class)

Can Museums be decolonized?

Readings:

- Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Chapter 1 (Required)
- Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni. “Decoloniality as the Future of Africa.” *History Compass* 13/10 (2015): 485–496.

Leila Demarest, *Decolonizing the Museum. Africa is a Country*. Accessed:

<https://africasacountry.com/2019/05/decolonizing-the-museum>

Molemo Moilola, *Against a Willing Amnesia. Africa is a Country*. Accessed:

<https://africasacountry.com/2021/12/against-a-willing-amnesia>

Video:

- Molemo Moilola “A Radical Commitment to Repair: Perspectives on Restitution” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsUrb5PxHxc&list=PLQeLLbmf_cIWasO2zy1UXjvvgx3awhxO9&t=50s

Guest

WEEK 3

Session 1: Tuesday 9 July

Museums and Contemporary African Art. Conversations on Repatriation

(Exhibition Review is Due)

Readings:

- Maples, A.M. “African Restitution in a North American Context a Debate, a Summary, and a Challenge.” *African Arts*, 53 (4), 10-15, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1162/afar_a_00546. (Required)
- Benedict Savoy, “Introduction” of *Africa’s Struggle for Its Art: History of a Postcolonial Defeat*. Princeton University Press, 2022.
- Alexander Durie, Can you steal back something that’s already stolen?: how radical art duo Looty repatriated the Rosetta Stone. *The Guardian Online*. Accessed: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2024/apr/25/radical-art-collective-looty-rosetta-stone-benin-bronzes>

Videos to be Watched in Class:

- “These Items aren't for sale' Full Museum Scene from The Black Panther.” Uploaded on May 15, 2018. YouTube video, 3:40. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwBZIXk8LWg>
- The British Museum is full of stolen artifacts. VOX. Uploaded on August 5, 2020. YouTube video, 9:32. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoTxiRWrvp8>
- Rea, Naomi. "[European Museums Have Long Been Reluctant to Restitute African Heritage Objects. Changes in 2021 May Force Their Hands.](#)" *artnet News*, December 8, 2020.

Guest: Amanda Maples

Session 2: Thursday 11 July
Introducing Ibrahim Mahama

Readings:

- Nwagbogu, Azu, Ibrahim Mahama Builds Museums of the Future. *ArtReview*. 2022. <https://artreview.com/ibrahim-mahama-builds-museums-of-the-future/> Accessed: 06/18/2024 (Required)
- Ghana's Ibrahim Mahama: The artist clothing London's brutalist icon by Penny Dale (online article) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68846770>
 - Mahama at documenta 14: <https://www.documenta14.de/en/artists/13704/ibrahim-mahama>

To watch in Class:

- Mahama at the Barbican Center (Video): <https://www.barbican.org.uk/read-watch-listen/ibrahim-mahama-on-making-purple-hibiscus-0>
- Artist conversation with Mahama from 10 mins-30min mark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEkaYAOTWvU>

Guest: Sana Ginwala

WEEK 4

Session 1: Tuesday 16 July Monuments

Readings:

- Decker, Juilee, editor. Introduction: The Post Creation Life of Monuments and Memorials in *Fallen Monuments and Contested Memorials*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2024. (Required)
- Houlton, Thomas. Monuments and Colonial Domination in *Monuments as Cultural and Critical Objects : From Mesolithic to Eco-Queer*. Routledge, 2022.

Guest: Barnabas Ticha Mvuhti

Session 2: Thursday 18 Monuments

Readings:

- Laciste, Kristen. “Practical Work: Sapeuses (Women Sapeurs) in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.” *African Arts*, vol. 56, no. 4, 2023, pp. 62–79, https://doi.org/10.1162/afar_a_00730. (Required)
- Joseph Underwood. (2022). Authorship & Authority: The Contested Origins of Dakar’s African Renaissance Monument. Access: <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/african-renaissance-monument-dakar-1234640489/>

Extra Reading

- Arnoldi, Mary Jo. “Bamako, Mali: Monuments and Modernity in the Urban Imagination.” *Africa Today*, 2007, pp. 3–24.

Listen to the following podcast as suggested by Dr. Laciste for her guest lecture:

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/personnes-elegantes/transcript/>

Guest: Kristen Laciste

WEEK 5

Session 1: Tuesday 23 July

Afrofuturism or Africanfuturism

Readings:

- Cleveland, Kimberly. Introduction Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism: Same Difference in *Africanfuturism : African Imaginings of Other Times, Spaces, and Worlds*. Ohio University Press, 2024. (Required)
- Smith, Aaron X. (Editor), Asante, Molefi Kete. *Afrocentricity in Afrofuturism: Toward Afrocentric Futurism*. University Press of Mississippi, 2023.
- Nnedimma Nkemdili Okorafor, “Africanfuturism Defined,” Nnedi's Wahala Zone Blog, October 19th, 2019.
- Mark Dery, “Black to the Future,” in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture* (Duke University Press, 1994).

Extra Reading

- Shirin Assa (2017) “Pumzi; The Labyrinth of FutureS,” *Journal of the African Literature Association*, 11:1, 58-69

To Watch in Class:

Pumzi, dir. Wanuri Kahiu (2009), <https://vimeo.com/46891859>

Afronauts, Nuotama Bodom: youtube

Guest: Joseph Kasau

Session 2: Thursday 25 July

**Biennials and the Global Stage for Contemporary African Art
Final Paper Due!**

Readings

- Smooth Nzewi, “Global Biennial Discourses...” in Dak’Art pp 171-182 (required)

Guest: Kwasi

Guest Lectures

Tuesday	25 June: Lauren	Thursday	28 June
Tuesday	02 July: Elisabeth	Thursday	04 July
Tuesday	09 July: Amanda	Thursday	11 July Sana
Tuesday	16 July: Barnabas	Thursday	18 July Kristen
Tuesday	23 July: Joseph	Thursday	25 July